

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims**

1. **(Currently Amended)** A small interfering RNA (siRNA), comprising a sense strand and an antisense strand, wherein the antisense strand is complementary to the sense strand and has a sequence sufficiently complementary to a target mRNA sequence to direct target-specific RNA interference (RNAi), and

wherein the target mRNA sequence comprises a cleavage site for RISC, and

wherein the sense strand and the antisense strand comprise uridines, cytidines, adenosines and guanosines with at least one adenosine or guanosine within 2 nucleotides upstream and 9 nucleotides downstream of the cleavage site referencing the antisense strand, and

wherein the sense strand and the antisense strand are modified by the substitution of each uridine with a 2'-fluoro uridine and each cytidine with a 2'-fluoro cytidine,

wherein the adenosines and guanosines of the sense strand are 2'-ribonucleotides, and

wherein the antisense strand is modified by the substitution of at least one adenosine with 2'-deoxy adenosine or at least one guanosine with 2'-deoxy guanosine within the 2 nucleotides upstream and 9 nucleotides downstream of the cleavage site, such that *in vivo* stability is enhanced as compared to a corresponding unmodified siRNA, and such that the siRNA retains the ability to inhibit expression of the target mRNA by at least 30% as compared to a corresponding unmodified siRNA.

2. **(Canceled)**

3. **(Previously presented)** The siRNA of claim 1, wherein the target mRNA specifies the amino acid sequence of a cellular protein.

4. **(Previously presented)** The siRNA of claim 1, wherein the target mRNA specifies the amino acid sequence of a viral protein.

5-18. **(Canceled)**

19. **(Withdrawn)** A small interfering RNA (siRNA), comprising a sense strand and an antisense strand, wherein the antisense strand is complementary to the sense strand and has a sequence sufficiently complementary to a target mRNA sequence to direct target-specific RNA interference (RNAi), and wherein the antisense strand is modified by the substitution of each uridine with 5-bromo uridine, such that *in vivo* stability is enhanced as compared to a corresponding unmodified siRNA.

20. **(Canceled)**

21. **(Withdrawn)** A small interfering RNA (siRNA), comprising a sense strand and an antisense strand, wherein the antisense strand is complementary to the sense strand has a sequence sufficiently complementary to a target mRNA sequence to direct target-specific RNA interference (RNAi), and wherein the antisense strand is modified by the substitution of each phosphodiester linkage with a phosphorothioate linkage, such that *in vivo* stability is enhanced as compared to a corresponding unmodified siRNA and wherein the sense strand is unmodified.

22. **(Withdrawn)** A small interfering RNA (siRNA), comprising a sense strand and an antisense strand, wherein the antisense strand is complementary to the sense strand and has a sequence sufficiently complementary to a target mRNA sequence to direct target-specific RNA interference (RNAi), and wherein the antisense strand and the sense strand are modified by the substitution of each phosphodiester linkage with a phosphorothioate linkage, such that *in vivo* stability is enhanced as compared to a corresponding unmodified siRNA.

23-26. **(Canceled)**

27. **(Withdrawn)** A small interfering RNA (siRNA), comprising a sense strand and an antisense strand, wherein the antisense strand has a sequence sufficiently complementary to a target mRNA sequence to direct target-specific RNA interference (RNAi), and wherein the antisense strand is complementary to the sense strand throughout the siRNA but for mismatched base pairs at the two 3' nucleotides, referencing the antisense strand.

28-32. **(Canceled)**

33. **(Previously presented)** The siRNA of claim 1, which is between about 15 and 25 residues in length.

34. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of any one of claims 19 and 91-94, which is between about 15 and 25 residues in length.

35. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 21 or 22, which is between about 15 and 25 residues in length.

36. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of any one of claims 27 and 101-105, which is between about 15 and 25 residues in length.

37-38. **(Canceled)**

39. **(Previously presented)** A composition comprising the siRNA molecule of claim 1 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

40. **(Withdrawn)** A method of activating target-specific RNA interference (RNAi) in a cell comprising introducing into said cell the siRNA of any one of the preceding claims, said siRNA being introduced in an amount sufficient for degradation of target mRNA to occur, thereby activating target-specific RNAi in the cell.

41. **(Withdrawn)** The method of claim 40, wherein the siRNA is introduced into the cell by contacting the cell with the siRNA.

42. **(Withdrawn)** The method of claim 41, wherein the siRNA is introduced into the cell by contacting the cell with a composition comprising the siRNA and a lipophilic carrier.

43. **(Withdrawn)** The method of claim 40, wherein the siRNA is introduced into the cell by transfecting or infecting the cell with a vector comprising nucleic acid sequences capable of producing the siRNA when transcribed in the cell.
44. **(Withdrawn)** The method of claim 40, wherein the siRNA is introduced into the cell by injecting into the cell a vector comprising nucleic acid sequences capable of producing the siRNA when transcribed in the cell.
45. **(Withdrawn)** The method of claim 44, wherein the vector comprises transgene nucleic acid sequences.
46. **(Withdrawn)** The method of any one of claims 40-45, wherein the target mRNA specifies the amino acid sequence of a protein involved or predicted to be involved in a human disease or disorder.
47. **(Withdrawn)** A cell obtained by the method of any one of claims 40-46.
48. **(Withdrawn)** The cell of claim 47 which is of mammalian origin.
49. **(Withdrawn)** The cell of claim 47 which is of murine origin.
50. **(Withdrawn)** The cell of claim 47 which is of human origin.
51. **(Withdrawn)** The cell of claim 47, which is an embryonic stem cell.
52. **(Withdrawn)** An organism derived from the cell of claim 51.
53. **(Withdrawn)** A method of activating target-specific RNA interference (RNAi) in an organism comprising administering to said organism the siRNA of any one of the preceeding claims, said siRNA being administered in an amount sufficient for degradation of the target mRNA to occur, thereby activating target-specific RNAi in the organism.

54. **(Withdrawn)** The method of claim 53, wherein the siRNA is administered by an intravenous or intraperitoneal route.

55. **(Withdrawn)** The method of claim 53, wherein the target mRNA specifies the amino acid sequence of a protein involved or predicted to be involved in a human disease or disorder.

56. **(Withdrawn)** An organism obtained by the method of any one of claims 53-55.

57. **(Withdrawn)** The organism of claim 56 which is of mammalian origin.

58. **(Withdrawn)** The organism of claim 56 which is of murine origin.

59. **(Withdrawn)** The organism of claim 56 which is of human origin.

60. **(Withdrawn)** The organism of any one of claims 56-59, wherein the target mRNA specifies the amino acid sequence of a protein involved or predicted to be involved in a human disease or disorder.

61. **(Withdrawn)** The organism of any one of claims 56-59, wherein degradation of the target mRNA produces a loss-of-function phenotype.

62. **(Withdrawn)** The method of claims 40-45 and 53-55, wherein degradation of the target mRNA is such that the protein specified by said target mRNA is decreased by at least 10%.

63. **(Withdrawn)** A method of treating a disease or disorder associated with the activity of a protein specified by a target mRNA in a subject, comprising administering to said subject the siRNA of any one of the preceeding claims, said siRNA being administered in an amount sufficient for degradation of the target mRNA to occur, thereby treating the disease or disorder associated with the protein.

64-86. **(Canceled)**

87. **(Previously presented)** The siRNA of claim 1, wherein the antisense strand is modified by the substitution of each adenosine with a 2'-deoxy adenosine and each guanosine with a 2'-deoxy guanosine within 2 nucleotides upstream and 9 nucleotides downstream of the cleavage site referencing the antisense strand.
88. **(Previously presented)** The siRNA of claim 1, wherein the antisense and sense strands are aligned such that the siRNA has 3' 2-nucleotide overhangs.
89. **(Previously presented)** The siRNA of claim 88, wherein the 2-nucleotide overhangs are dTdT overhangs.
90. **(Previously presented)** The siRNA of claim 88, wherein the 2-nucleotide overhangs are UU overhangs.
91. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 19, wherein the sense strand is unmodified.
92. **(Withdrawn)** A small interfering RNA (siRNA), comprising a sense strand and an antisense strand, wherein the antisense strand is complementary to the sense strand and has a sequence sufficiently complementary to a target mRNA sequence to direct target-specific RNA interference (RNAi), and wherein the antisense strand is modified by the substitution of each uridine with 5-iodo uridine, such that in vivo stability is enhanced as compared to a corresponding unmodified siRNA.
93. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 92, wherein the sense strand is unmodified.
94. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 92, wherein each uridine of the sense strand is substituted with 2'-fluoro uridine and each cytidine of the sense strand is substituted with 2'-fluoro cytidine.
95. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of any one of claims 19 and 91-94, wherein the antisense and sense strands are aligned such that the siRNA has 3' 2-nucleotide overhangs.

96. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 95, wherein the 2-nucleotide overhangs are dTdT overhangs.

97. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 95, wherein the 2-nucleotide overhangs are UU overhangs.

98. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 21 or 22, wherein the antisense and sense strands are aligned such that the siRNA has 3' 2-nucleotide overhangs.

99. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 98, wherein the 2-nucleotide overhangs are dTdT overhangs.

100. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 98, wherein the 2-nucleotide overhangs are UU overhangs.

101. **(Withdrawn)** A small interfering RNA (siRNA), comprising a sense strand and an antisense strand, wherein the antisense strand is complementary to the sense strand and has a sequence sufficiently complementary to a target mRNA sequence to direct target-specific RNA interference (RNAi), and wherein the antisense strand is modified by the substitution of each purine with a 2,6-diaminopurine, such that *in vivo* stability is enhanced as compared to a corresponding unmodified siRNA.

102. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 101, wherein the sense strand is unmodified.

103. **(Withdrawn)** A small interfering RNA (siRNA), comprising a sense strand and an antisense strand, wherein the antisense strand has a sequence sufficiently complementary to a target mRNA sequence to direct target-specific RNA interference (RNAi), and wherein the siRNA is modified within the 5' half of the siRNA referencing the antisense strand and unmodified within the 3' half of the siRNA referencing the antisense strand, such that *in vivo* stability is enhanced as compared to a corresponding unmodified siRNA.

104. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 103, wherein the modifications comprise substitution of each adenosine with a 2'-deoxy adenosine, substitution of each guanosine with a 2'-deoxy guanosine, substitution of each uridine with 2'-fluoro uridine and substitution of each cytidine with 2'-fluoro cytidine in the antisense strand.

105. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 103, wherein the modifications are within 9-19 nucleotides from the 3' end of the antisense strand.

106. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of any one of claims 27 and 101-105, wherein the antisense and sense strands are aligned such that the siRNA has 3' 2-nucleotide overhangs.

107. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 106, wherein the 2-nucleotide overhangs are dTdT overhangs.

108. **(Withdrawn)** The siRNA of claim 106, wherein the 2-nucleotide overhangs are UU overhangs.